

## ***Lewistown Fire - Rescue***

William D. Rash Jr., Fire Chief  
305 West Watson  
Lewistown, MT. 59457  
(406) 535-1780  
(406) 535-3052 fax  
brash@ci.lewistown.mt.us

January 22, 2007

Representative Jack Wells, Chairman  
Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education  
Montana House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 200400  
Helena, MT. 59620

Dear Mr. Wells;

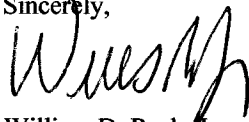
I am writing this letter in support of House Bill 2. More specifically, in support of the requested funding for the ***Montana Fire Services Training School*** (FSTS) that is contained within this bill.

I have been employed as the fire chief of the Lewistown Fire Department and the Lewistown Rural Fire District for just over three years. Our jurisdiction has a population of approximately 10,000 residents and operates with seven career firefighters and twenty one part-paid (volunteer) firefighters. We cover a city/rural area of over 162 square miles. We must provide the full range of fire-rescue services, to include significant urban-wildland issues, due to our geographic location. Mutual assistance is extremely limited, particularly in the areas of structural firefighting, hazardous materials, motor vehicle extrication and other more specialized areas expected of the fire service today.

I was born and raised in Bozeman and as a twenty plus year volunteer firefighter and career chief with the Belgrade City/Rural Fire Department, have worked with the FSTS staff for over twenty nine years. I have found the FSTS administration and staff to truly care about addressing the very dynamic changes involved with training the fire service. Most Montana fire departments, including Lewistown, do not have the funding or staffing to send our firefighters to schools several hundred miles away. The FSTS has worked very hard to bring quality training to our region's firefighters. ***I truly mean this when I say that the FSTS has gone above and beyond the call of duty to bring necessary training to our region and to do the best with what they have in delivering a great service to the Montana fire service.*** Three years ago our closest structural mutual assistance was Great Falls and Billings. Today, through the efforts of the training provided to our region's firefighters through the FSTS, we now have two departments within fifteen miles that are trained in structural firefighting. The FSTS is truly the hub of the Montana fire service.

With the significant increase of fire danger along with the ever growing complexities of fire-rescue services, we need to better support our Montana Fire Services Training School so that we can keep our MONTANA firefighters and communities safer. There is no better investment than supporting the training of those who are willing to risk their lives to save others. Please support the funding requested for the Fire Services Training School as represented in House Bill 2.

Sincerely,



William D. Rash, Jr.  
Fire Chief  
Lewistown City/Rural Fire Department